



Rich Rautenstrauch/Chieftain

Jackie Wepruk, of Lacombe, British Columbia, leaves Ferguson Ridge Ski area with the encouragement of the crowd. Jackie, a highly experienced musher, has previously run in the Alaskan Iditarod.

2015 ECX ANOTHER 'EXTREME' SUCCESS

By Rich Rautenstrauch
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race does not come by the "Extreme" part of its name lightly. With event dates spreading out over four days, and with 200 volunteers, 25 mushers, more than 200 dogs and a nearly ever-present audience, there's little time for rest.

Imagine what it's like for the 100-mile and 200-mile mushers and their teams navigating the wild and icy trails of the Wallowa Mountains, starting out on Thursday at noon and racing through the night in the darkness and retuning to the Ferguson Ridge Ski Area finish line 30-40 hours later.

Think about the veterinary team, the snowmobile sweep teams, and the communication team stationed at race checkpoint Ollokot spending three days in mostly 20-degree weather, making sure it all comes off without a hitch. The local Gambler's snowmobile club cuts the race trail from Fergi to Twin Lakes and to the breaks of the Snake River, making it all possible.

All the effort involved is "extreme."

Thursday's start at Fergi was beautiful as was the weather for the whole event. A nice crowd viewed the beginning of four races: the 100-mile race, the 200-mile race, a 62-mile pot race, and a new event, the Juniors race. From there it was off to the mountains on an extremely fast race course of packed snow and ice. Course records were set for three of the four events.

Brett Bruggeman, of Great Falls, Mont., set a new course record and took first place in the 200-mile event. On Bruggeman's first check-in at Ollokot, he was two hours ahead of all racers. He finished in 30:03. Jessie Royer, of Darby, Mont., finished second at 30:40. Alyana Ferraro, also of Darby, took third in the big race with a time of 30:53.

In the 100-mile, race Bino Fowler, of Bend, set the bar higher with a record time of 17:51. Laurie Warren, of Council, Idaho, was seven minutes behind Bino with a time of 17:58. Garrett Warren, also of Council, took third with a time of 17:59.

The two-day pot race involving two 31-mile races in two day was won by Trevor Warren, of Council, with a combined time and course record of 6:44. Jane Devlin, of Bend, took second and Jessica Wallstrom, of Park City, Utah,



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Alyana Ferraro, of Darby, Mont., leaves the Imnaha riverbed behind as she starts her fourth leg of the 200-mile race heading up the Gumboot road to Fergi.

came in third.

In the Juniors race, Moriah Hubble, of Summerville, took first in 4:17, and this year's only Wallowa County entrant in the ECX, Morgan Anderson, of Enterprise, came in a close second at 4:19.

The Wallowa County Chieftain had an all-access pass which included a trip to Ollokot. It is here in the canyon of the Imnaha River where all 21 teams staged for upcoming legs of their races and rested their dogs. ECX president Ran-

dy Greenshields, an Enterprise veterinarian, was part of the veterinary team that checked dogs and provided any care the animals needed. Snowmobile sweepers Tony Yost, Dave McConathy and Adam Stien also spent night and day checking on racers. New camp manger Adam Wing and his assistant, JoAnn Fuioli, kept track of times, "who's who," and "racers in and out."

Camp Ollokot was really busy starting around dusk with the first mushers arriving not


one by one, but sometimes two or three teams at a time. It was dogs in and dogs out all night long. The volunteers at this camp get to experience the wild excitement of the race. Two hundred very excited dogs, howling in the darkness, their canine voices echoing off the walls of the canyon, means no sleep for anybody in the camp. For the mushers this is a place to enjoy hospitality, a resting spot in the middle of an extreme race.



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Local veterinarian and ECX president Randy Greenshields, standing at left, takes a break with his volunteers and with mushers in the Camp Ollokot Hospitality Tent.

Student of the Week



Rocky Davidson
Enterprise High School

Rocky Davidson has earned a 3.53 GPA over his high school career. He has taken upper level math and science and is currently enrolled in AP Literature and Composition as well Animal Science. He has excelled in the performing arts such as Drama, Choir, and Band. Thank you Rocky for what you have contributed to EHS.

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